

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /050 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/INS:JNACH

APPROVED BY NEA/INS: DKUX

NEA/PMVANORDER

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P R 020041Z JUL 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL MADRAS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, US, IN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT NOON PRESS BRIEFING: REMARKS ON
SIMONS' EXPULSION FROM INDIA

AT JULY 1 NOON PRESS BRIEFING, FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK
PLACE BETWEEN DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN AND JOURNALIST. REGARDING
ING EXPULSION OF WASHINGTON POST REPORTER LEW SIMONS FROM
INDIA EARLIER IN DAY:

QUESTION: HAVE YOU ANY COMMENT ON THE EXPULSION OF THE
WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT FROM INDIA?

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ANSWER: YES. IN NEW DELHI, THE U.S. EMBASSY EXPRESSED OUR STRONG REGRET REGARDING THE EXPULSION OF WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT LEWIS SIMONS. ON JUNE 26TH, OUR CHARGE EXPRESSED THE SERIOUS CONCERN OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ABOUT MR. SIMONS' THEN POSSIBLE EXPULSION WITH THE INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY.

ON JUNE 30TH, AFTER THE INDIANS HAD GIVEN MR. SIMONS ONLY 24 HOURS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY, OUR POLITICAL COUNSELOR EXPRESSED THE STRONG REGRET OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S ACTION.

HERE IN WASHINGTON, THE DEPARTMENT THIS MORNING HAS OFFICIALLY PROTESTED WITH THE INDIAN EMBASSY THE EXPULSION OF MR. SIMONS FROM INDIA.

QUESTION: BOB, WHAT IS OUR REGRET AND PROTEST BASED ON? I MEAN, WHAT IS IT THAT WE OBJECT TO BESIDES HIS REMOVAL?

ANSWER: AS I BELIEVE AMBASSADOR ANDERSON MADE CLEAR LAST WEEK, WE REGRET ANY ABRIDGEMENT OF THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, WHEREVER IT MAY OCCUR.

QUESTION: YOU KNOW, BOB, WITH SOME COUNTRIES THERE'S KIND OF A RECIPROCITY WHEN THIS KIND OF THING HAPPENS. IS THAT GOING TO OCCUR IN THIS INSTANCE? IS SOME INDIAN CORRESPONDENT GOING TO BE KICKED OUT OF THE UNITED STATES?

ANSWER: I DO NOT THINK WE USUALLY ENGAGE IN THAT KIND OF A MEASURE.

QUESTION: WELL, WE HAVE WITH THE RUSSIANS, FOR EXAMPLE.

ANSWER: IT IS NOT CONTEMPLATED WITH INDIA, I DO NOT BELIEVE.

QUESTION: HAVE ANY OTHER AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS BEEN WARNED THAT THEY RISK EXPULSION IF THEY CONTINUE TO WRITE?

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ANSWER: I DO NOT KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION.

QUESTION: IN ADDITION --

QUESTION: HAVE WE SAID ANYTHING ABOUT THAT?

QUESTION: EXCUSE ME.

QUESTION: NO. GO AHEAD.

QUESTION: HAVE WE SORT OF SUGGESTED TO THE INDIANS THAT THEY DON'T REPEAT THIS? I DON'T THINK THEY'RE TOO FOND OF THE NEW YORK TIMES' CORRESPONDENT EITHER. HE SEEMS TO FILE CRITICAL REPORTS FROM TIME TO TIME.

ANSWER: I THINK THROUGH OUR ACTIONS THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT UNDERSTANDS VERY WELL OUR ATTITUDE ABOUT ABRIDGEMENT OF THE PRESS FREEDOM AND EXPULSION OF AMERICAN CORRESPONDENTS.

QUESTION: IN ADDITION TO WHAT HAPPENED TO MR. SIMONS, ARE YOU IN THE MOOD TO TALK IN GENERAL TERMS ABOUT WHAT'S HAPPENING IN INDIA?

ANSWER: I DO NOT THINK I WANT TO GO BEYOND WHAT I HAVE JUST SAID AS FAR AS WHAT IS HAPPENING IN INDIA INTERNALLY.

QUESTION: DO YOU STILL CONSIDER INDIA AS THE LEADING DEMOCRACY IN ASIA?

ANSWER: I JUST DO NOT THINK IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR US TO GET INTO AN ASSESSMENT OF INDIA.

QUESTION: HAS INDIA REPLIED TO ANY PROTEST? WHAT HAVE THEY SAID?

ANSWER: I THINK THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WAS THAT THE REPORTER WAS IN VIOLATION OF THE INDIAN CENSORSHIP LAW.

QUESTION: POST FACTO OR RETROGRESSIVELY?

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ANSWER: I DO NOT KNOW HOW THEY MADE THEIR DETERMINATION OF VIOLATION.

QUESTION: IT'S THE SAME THING.

QUESTION: IS THIS WHAT YOU GOT FROM THE EMBASSY HERE WHEN YOU PROTESTED? DID THEY SAY THAT?

ANSWER: NO. THIS WAS FROM MY PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDING, FROM NEW DELHI'S REPORTING. I DO NOT HAVE ANY REPORT ON THE ACCOUNT OF OUR EXCHANGE WITH THE INDIAN EMBASSY THIS MORNING.

QUESTION: HOW DID YOU ACQUAINT THE INDIAN EMBASSY TODAY ABOUT THIS?

ANSWER: DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY DUBS CALLED THE
INDIAN MINISTER, MR. GONSALVES. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: EXPULSION, PRESS CONFERENCES, JOURNALISTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE155848
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JNACH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750228-0766
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750791/aaaaddjj.tel
Line Count: 172
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <05 NOV 2003 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPARTMENT NOON PRESS BRIEFING: REMARKS ON SIMONS' EXPULSION FROM INDIA
TAGS: PFOR, US, IN, (SIMONS, LEWIS M)
To: NEW DELHI
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006